



Robley Rex VA Medical Center, Louisville, KY

The Volunteer Promise

Volume 71

June 2012

Mark Your Calendars!

Thursday, June 14
Flag Day

Sunday, June 17
Father's Day

Wednesday, July 4
Independence Day
Administrative Offices Closed

Thursday, July 19
VAWS Committee Meeting
7:00 P.M.

Sunday, August 26
Welcome Home Event
Louisville Zoo

Monday, September 3
Labor Day
Administrative Offices Closed

From a Grateful Veteran

Voluntary Service received a heartfelt, hand-written note from a Veteran in transition from homelessness into a permanent home. He had received one of the HUD/VASH kits so generously donated by you, our partners. He wrote:

"To Those Involved,

My sincerest thank you for helping me in this moment of hardship. To receive these gifts made me feel like a kid at Christmas. I even cried a little. :-)

Because (prior to receiving this gift) I had 4 saucers, small plates, one spoon, one fork, 1 tiny bowl and a cooking pot from my grandmother. So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you and God Bless You!"



If you are interested in supporting the HUD/VASH Program, see page 5 for a list of suggested items for transition kits.

Inside this issue:

Volunteer Recognition	2
Run for the Wall	3
Student Volunteer	3
Welcome Home	4
Veterans Drivers License	4
Veterans Hiring Fair	4
Material Donations	5
Monetary Donations	6



On Friday, May 18, 2012, approximately 105 volunteers from General Electric (GE) Appliance Park arrived bright and early at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center. Their mission that day was to make improvements to our nature trail so that Veterans and staff alike could once again enjoy a safe and peaceful walk along the path. The trail had become unsafe for use over the past 3-4 years due to damage from an ice storm, wind storm and repeated flooding.

GE secured sponsors who provided everything from bottled water to 20 tons of gravel. Donating time and materials, GE partnered with Voluntary Service and Engineering maintenance staff to improve not only the trail, but the fitness stations located along the trail as well. The response by GE personnel to the event was so great that the volunteers were able to expand their efforts to include the beautification of the Memorial Park at the front of the medical center.

Whether participating in the MOVE!® or the WIN program, or simply taking a stroll, Veterans and staff will benefit from the restoration of the trail. They will be able to enjoy the great outdoors while working to improve their health.

Brightening the Path

Volunteer Recognition



On Saturday, April 14, 2012, Robley Rex VA Medical Center celebrated the precious gift of time given by our cherished volunteers by hosting a luncheon for them at the Olmsted. In addition to enjoying a wonderful meal, each volunteer in attendance received a small token of appreciation for their volunteer service. Some also received pins or other mementos commemorating the total hours and/or years they have volunteered.

Two individuals were distinguished as Volunteers of the Year. Mr. Harold Sloan was selected to receive the 2012 John Duerr Award for Outstanding Male Volunteer of the Year and Ms. Darlene Havel was presented the 2012 Bessie Johnson Award for Outstanding Female Volunteer of the Year.

Once again, due to the generosity of medical center employees, each volunteer present also received a door prize.

Mark your calendars for next year's event, scheduled for April 6, 2013!

Below is a summary of your accomplishments along with thanks from the medical center leadership.

2011 Contributions

Regular Scheduled Volunteers - 671

Hours Worked – 151,978

Total Value of Hours Worked - \$3,246,250

Value of Material Donations - \$311,678

Total Monetary Donations - \$81,663

"Today we celebrate 66 years of volunteer service and are honored to have this opportunity to formally recognize your contributions. Your hours of volunteer service -- your time -- is something that is unique to you; something that cannot be duplicated. All of the money in the world cannot replace a single hour of your time, and you have given it freely in service to Veterans. For that, we thank you.

We are very fortunate to share a unique and rewarding partnership with each of you serving at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center. In our medical center and in our community, you personify the value of time well spent. We truly value both your countless hours of friendship to and compassion for the Veterans who use our hospital and your financial support, which we need to offer a level of personalized care that far exceeds the boundaries of clinical standards. The significance of your contributions cannot be defined simply by statistics and dollar values, though those totals are important markers of your activities. Time is one thing that cannot be purchased. Once it is used, it is gone. Rest assured that as a VA volunteer, you have used your time well in service to the men and women who sacrificed so much for all of us. For those of you who are Veterans, our thanks is two-fold. We thank you both for your military service and for your ongoing volunteer service."

Wayne L. Pfeffer, MHSA, FACHE

Medical Center Director

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Beth M. Brown, MS, FACHE

Associate Director/Operations

Marylee Rothschild, MD

Chief of Staff

Run for the Wall

On Wednesday, May 23, 2012, Robley Rex VA Medical Center once again had the privilege of hosting Run for the Wall participants as they traveled across the country on their way to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. The purpose of this annual mission is "To promote healing among ALL veterans and their families and friends, to call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA), to honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA) from all wars, and to support our military personnel all over the world."

More than 300 motorcycles arrived at the medical center approximately 8:45 a.m. Before departing at 10:30 a.m., riders visited wards and clinics, brightening the day of numerous Veterans. Staff and volunteers also enjoyed mingling with the riders and hearing of their trip experiences. And, as usual, many riders enjoyed our "hot, fresh, and good" popcorn!

Voluntary Service would like to thank the Canteen and others who donated refreshments, as well as the VA Police for coordinating traffic and ensuring a safe arrival and departure for the riders. We look forward to seeing this group again next year.



Student Volunteer Program

The Robley Rex VA Medical Center Student Summer Volunteer Program has returned for 2012! Understanding that the time spent in volunteer service will enhance their future educational and employment opportunities, students, ages 14 to 18, will offer to share their time volunteering with us this summer. These students will have the opportunity to work with health care and administrative professionals in a variety of areas. You will recognize our student volunteers by their blue polo-style uniform shirts and their official volunteer name badge. Please welcome these integral members of our quality VA healthcare team as they work to enhance our service to Veterans.

Students participating in the summer volunteer program not only earn valuable experience but are also eligible to compete for a variety of local and national scholarships. This year's program will run from Monday, June 5 through Friday, August 3; students must attend an orientation June 5, 6 or 8 from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., at the Medical Center. For additional information about this program, contact Marybeth Stewart, Student Volunteer Coordinator, Voluntary Service, at (502) 287-6221.



Welcome Home 1163rd Medical Unit Kentucky National Guard

VA sponsors Welcome Home Events around the country for returning military service members and their families. These events provide the opportunity for dissemination of important information about accessing healthcare and other benefits available through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

At our local 2012 Welcome Home Event, we will honor members of the 1163rd Medical Unit of the Kentucky National Guard located in Shelbyville, Kentucky. Members of the 1163rd have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, providing medical support to coalition forces and detainees in the Global War on Terror.

Robley Rex VA Medical Center Social Worker Crystal Woodard will be coordinating this annual event. The tentative date and location for 2012 is Sunday, August 26 at the Louisville Zoo. In addition to providing essential information to members of the 1163rd and their family members, they will be treated to Zoo admission and a buffet lunch. Donations in support of this annual event should be directed to GPF 532.

Veteran Status on Kentucky Driver's License

On March 29, 2012, Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear signed into law a bill allowing Veterans to have their status included on new and renewed driver licenses. "This new law fills a long-standing need of our Veterans," Governor Beshear said.

Veterans frequently seek official government identification recognizing them as Veterans. Only Veterans who retire from the military or who are 100 percent service-connected disabled are eligible for military identification cards. The vast majority of Kentucky's Veterans do not fall into either of these two categories. Although a military discharge document, known as a DD-214, should be sufficient proof of Veteran status, many businesses and organizations that offer discounts to Veterans do not recognize this document as a valid form of Veteran ID.

The new law offering Veterans a "Veteran" designation on a new or renewed driver's license solves that problem. Beginning July 15 2012, when you renew your driver's license on expiration, or get a new one for any reason, simply show your DD-214 to the Circuit Court Clerk and request a "Veteran" designation on your license. If you do not have a copy of your DD-214, you can request one online or via regular mail.



VETERAN HIRING FAIR & OPEN HOUSE

1000s of Jobs Available - Register Now!



**June 26-28, 2012
Detroit's COBO Center
One Washington Boulevard
Detroit, MI 48226
FREE**

The Veteran Hiring Fair is part of the National Veterans Conference (NVC) in Detroit, Michigan, from June 26 - 28. For more information, please visit:
<http://www.nationalveteransconference.com/>

Program Adoption Requests/Donation Needs

Your opportunity to lend a hand



Gift Cards for Heroes—Our youngest population of Veterans are in need of items to help them support their families. Items especially needed include gift cards for groceries/gasoline. Many of these Veterans have families that include young children and just need a hand up. Gift cards are issued only on the recommendation of the Veteran's Social Worker.

Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM)—Veterans in this program are often isolated from others, largely due to their medical conditions. Your donation of tickets and passes will allow case workers to take these Veterans on occasional field trips that will support socialization. Suggested opportunities include Kentucky State Fair tickets, bowling passes, museum tickets, ball game tickets, fast food restaurant coupons, etc. Staff would like to take groups of approximately 12 Veterans on any trip.

HUD/VASH Treatment Program—Items are needed to support Veterans entering the HUD/VASH Treatment Program. Veterans in this program are in transition from homelessness to homes of their own. VA and HUD work together to place the Veterans and their families, and VA works with them on an ongoing basis to ensure that they continue the habits and skills necessary to remain in their new homes. Often, the Veterans move into their homes with limited resources or furnishings. Your will help them settle more quickly and securely, supporting a much improved new lifestyle. Some groups are choosing to prepare transition kits for the HUD/VASH Veterans. Suggested items include:

Air mattresses
 Sheets and pillow cases
 Pillows and blankets
 Towels and wash cloths
 Soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste
 Laundry detergent
 Toilet paper
 Mop, broom, bucket, and dust pan

Dishes
 Pots & Pans
 Utensils (eating & cooking)
 Can opener
 Dish drainer, dish cloths, and dish liquid
 Paper towels
 Cleaning supplies/agents
 Vacuum cleaners



Program Adoptions—Multiple areas throughout the medical center would benefit from your donation of snack foods for the Veterans receiving inpatient and outpatient care.

Community Residential Care (CRC) Program—Veterans enrolled in this program are living in reduced circumstances in the community. They often find it difficult to purchase the little things most of us take for granted such as an occasional snack, toiletries, and similar items.

Contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221 to discuss your ability to provide assistance with any of these projects or activities.

MONETARY NEEDS FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS

Patient Comfort Items: (GPF 515): Donations to this account will be used to support the Comfort Cart, a program in which volunteers provide personal hygiene items to hospitalized Veterans. Items include such basic necessities as toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, shaving cream, shampoo and shower gel.

Television (TV) Fund: (GPF 505): While new TVs are often included in the budget for some remodeling or new construction projects, there is no budget to replace TVs in patient waiting areas when they become inoperable. Currently, the Grayson County CBOC is in need of a replacement television for their waiting area.

Social Work Service Emergency Fund: (GPF 502) Donations to this account support patient emergency needs in situations not covered by medical center resources. These include certain travel expenses and clothing needs for patients upon discharge from the medical center.

OEF/OIF Welcome Home: (GPF 532) Funds donated to GPF 532 (OIF/OEF Welcome Home) will be used to support our annual Welcome Home event, which honors returning combat Veterans.

Stand Down for the Homeless: (GPF 525) Funds are needed to support Stand Down 2011. Proceeds will be used to purchase clothing and personal items for homeless Veterans who need our support.

For a complete list of General Post Funds Accounts and their definitions, refer to the *General Post Funds and Material Donations* booklet published by Voluntary Service.

Remember, Your Gift is Tax Deductible

Although VA is not a 501(c)(3) organization, the Internal Revenue Service authorizes that donations made to the VA are tax deductible according to the Federal Tax Code as "Donations to the United States," in the manner and to the extent allowable by law (**NOTE: The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has special rules regarding the tax deductibility of contributions of \$250 or more**). The VA ensures that all contributions are used efficiently and responsibly. Donors should know that **100%** of every contribution goes directly to benefit Veterans and their families.

The Volunteer Promise

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You may also view our newsletter on line at <http://www.louisville.va.gov/>. Scroll down and click on "Volunteer or Give," then click on Volunteer Promise Newsletter.

We welcome your thoughts about this newsletter and your ideas for articles. Contact Voluntary Service to share your suggestions.

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